

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
October 23, 2003

THE STRAND WALKWAY RECONSTRUCTION

File No. 03-126
Project Manager: Christopher Kroll

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$150,000 to the City of Manhattan Beach for the design of the reconstruction of The Strand walkway.

LOCATION: The Strand, City of Manhattan Beach, Los Angeles County (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Public Access

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: The Strand

Exhibit 2: Letters of Support

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following Resolution pursuant to Sections 31400 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to the City of Manhattan Beach (City) to prepare detailed design drawings, specifications, and cost estimates for reconstruction of The Strand walkway, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of any funds, the City shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a work program, including scope of work, budget and schedule, the names of any contractors it intends to use to carry out these tasks, and a signing plan for the project acknowledging Conservancy participation.
2. As applicable to reconstruction of an existing accessway, the City shall incorporate the Conservancy’s “Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development” into the planning and design of The Strand reconstruction project.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the public access objectives and criteria set forth in Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31400 *et seq.*).
 2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
 3. The proposed project will serve more than local needs.”
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends authorization to disburse \$150,000 to the City of Manhattan Beach (City) to prepare detailed design drawings, specifications, and cost estimates for reconstruction of The Strand walkway (Exhibit 1). The Strand runs the full length of the City’s shoreline (more than two miles) and connects with a walkway in the City of Hermosa Beach. The walkway is located between ocean-fronting homes and the public beach, Manhattan State Beach. The Strand also provides pedestrian access to Manhattan Beach Pier and there are many stairways along the walkway that provide beach access. Manhattan State Beach attracts approximately one million visitors annually.

Originally constructed in 1913, The Strand has deteriorated due to wear, subsurface movement, utility construction, and weathering. The existing light poles were installed in the late 1960s and early 1970s and have also deteriorated. In addition, water ponds in several areas of the walkway, adversely impacting both public use and the structural stability of the walkway. The City is proposing to do substantial reconstruction of The Strand, including removing and reconstructing the concrete walkway, replacing deteriorated lighting, repairing deteriorated retaining walls, and improving drainage. The project would also incorporate emergency call boxes at several locations along The Strand and new resting/viewing areas for people with disabilities.

The project would include the installation of Continuous Deflective Separator (CDS) units at city storm drains at 18th Street and 31st Street. City storm drains pass under The Strand and discharge into Santa Monica Bay. The CDS units screen out trash from storm drain flows before they reach the beach and the ocean. The City proposes also to construct low-flow diversions to the adjacent sewers at 18th Street and 31st Street. These diversions would allow summer low flows, which are high in contaminants, to be diverted to the sewage system. Both the CDS units and low-flow diversions would improve water quality in Santa Monica Bay and complement the CDS units installed at 6th Street, 8th Street, and 2nd Street (currently in construction) in 2003 with funding from the Conservancy, as well as City financed projects at Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Rosecrans Avenue.

The City anticipates a three-year project and has divided the project into three phases: Phase 1 – the design phase with six public workshops and community meetings to get community input; Phase 2 – removal and replacement of the walkway surface and curbs, lighting improvements, retaining wall structural repairs, and other above ground improvements; and Phase 3 – infrastructure improvements including the CDS units/low-flow diversions. The City may retain a construction management contractor to oversee portions of Phase 2. The City has estimated the total cost of the project to be \$4.5 million and has already set aside \$2 million. Although all necessary funding for the project has not yet been secured, the City would like to proceed with the design phase and will complete the construction as funding becomes available.

Site Description: See the “Project Summary” section above.

Project History: Since 1913, the City has made repairs to the walkway and replaced lighting on an as-needed basis. Most of the lights were last replaced in 1972. In 1998, the City hired an engineering consultant to investigate some limited repair work for the walkway and retaining walls. The consultant’s inspections revealed, however, that much more extensive reconstruction is needed for the walkway, retaining walls, lighting, and electrical system and to address the problem of ponding/flooding in some areas. In 1999, the City Council directed staff to pursue complete reconstruction of the walkway while also addressing improved access for people with disabilities and storm water issues.

In addition to funding the three CDS units in 2001 as part of the second round of Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project projects, the Conservancy helped fund restoration of the Manhattan Beach Pier in the late 1980s. The proposed project is an important step in the City’s effort to assure safe public access to and along the shoreline and to maintain and improve the water quality of Santa Monica Bay.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Design:

Coastal Conservancy	\$150,000
City of Manhattan Beach	<u>200,000</u>
TOTAL:	\$350,000

The City has reserved \$2 million for this project. Of that, \$200,000 would be used for design and \$1.8 million held for construction. The City will need additional funding for construction.

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is an appropriation to the Conservancy from the coastal access account. These funds come from Coastal Commission permit fees and are to be used for public access purposes generally, with repair and maintenance as priority uses of the funds. Reconstruction of The Strand walkway is therefore consistent with this funding source.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy’s Public Access Program, Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31400 – 31409). Section 31400.1 provides that the Conservancy may award grants to any public agency to develop and operate lands for public access purposes to and along the coast. The Strand walkway is owned and maintained by the City and provides public access to and along Manhattan State Beach.

Section 31400.3 authorizes the Conservancy to provide such assistance as is necessary to help local governments establish a system of public coastal accessways and related functions. The proposed project would preserve an important public coastal accessway, The Strand walkway, that has deteriorated due to wear, subsurface movement, utility construction and weathering.

As required by Section 31401, the proposed project, although not yet designed, is consistent in general terms with the Conservancy’s Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development (e.g. Standard 6 – Lateral Accessways, Standard 7 – Vertical Accessways, Standard 12 – Support Facilities, and Standard 13 – Barrier-Free Access). Further, in order to ensure that the design of the accessway facilities conforms to these standards, as a condition of

the grant, the grantee will be required to incorporate the Conservancy guidelines into the design planning process, as appropriate.

Finally, as required by Section 31400.1, the proposed project will serve more than local needs. The Strand walkway is used by the approximately one million visitors to Manhattan State Beach who come from throughout the Los Angeles region and beyond.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective D** of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, the proposed project would increase coastal recreational opportunities for residents and visitors by protecting the existing public investment in infrastructure (*i.e.*, reconstructing The Strand walkway, a heavily used public accessway).

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objective B**, the proposed project would improve water quality and benefit coastal resources.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** Support letters are attached as Exhibit 2.
4. **Location:** The proposed project is located within the coastal zone. The Strand walkway is located adjacent to Manhattan State Beach and the Manhattan Beach Pier.
5. **Need:** The City of Manhattan Beach has reserved over \$2 million for this project so far. Nonetheless, additional grant funding is required to augment the City's contribution to complete the design and planning process.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** Manhattan Beach attracts over one million visitors a year to its pier and beach. All these visitors will walk on The Strand to get to or walk along the beach.

Additional Criteria

15. **Cooperation:** See the "Support of the public" and "Project Financing" sections above for description of the participation of project partners.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The proposed project is consistent with the following policies contained in the City of Manhattan Beach's certified Local Coastal Program (LCP):

I.A.1: The City shall maintain the existing vertical and horizontal accessways in the Manhattan Beach Coastal Zone.

I.B.6: The Strand shall be maintained for non-vehicular beach access.

III.3: The City should continue to maintain and enforce the City ordinances that prohibit disposal of oils or refuse in the ocean or on beaches.

The proposed project would provide for the maintenance of The Strand as the major beach accessway in the City. The project would also result in a reduction in the amount of contaminants and trash reaching the beach and Santa Monica Bay. These project objectives are consistent with the policies of the LCP.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15262 in that it involves planning and feasibility studies for possible future actions, which the Conservancy has not approved, adopted, or funded. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the proposed authorization.